

**RESOLUTION
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles has reviewed the matter of an amendment to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code relating to regulating vineyards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Community Standards District; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission finds as follows:

1. Since May 2014, forty-four (44) applications for vineyard development in the Santa Monica Mountains North Area CSD have been submitted to Regional Planning, a noticeable surge in the number of applications received as compared to prior years. A record search revealed that only 10 vineyard applications in the CSD area had been submitted in the prior three years combined (three applications between May 2013 and May 2014, five applications between May 2012 and May 2013, and two applications between May 2011 and May 2012). This influx of vineyard applications, especially those proposed on undeveloped and/or steeply sloped parcels, raised concerns related to the potential impacts on natural resources.
2. On June 16, 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted Interim Ordinance No. 2015-0022U, to temporarily prohibit the establishment or expansion of vineyards, either as a primary or accessory use, on all properties located in the area regulated by the Santa Monica Mountains North Area CSD, while a study was conducted to consider a possible zoning amendment applicable to the area.
3. On July 28, 2015, the Board held a public hearing on the matter and voted to extend Interim Ordinance No. 2015-0022U for four months and allow 28 pending vineyard applications to move forward with a Director's Review, provided they met certain requirements. Further, the Board directed the Department of Regional Planning (Regional Planning) to prepare an amendment to the Santa Monica Mountains North Area CSD to add new development standards and permit requirements for vineyards in all zones where they are an allowed use.
4. Title 22 does not contain a definition for vineyards as a specific use; currently, vineyards are considered a "crop" use, and are an allowed use in most zones in the Santa Monica Mountains North Area CSD (vineyards are not permitted in the Institutional zone). Vineyards are currently permitted through a site plan review for most zones, except for the Single Family Residential (R-1) and Residential Planned Development (-RPD) zones, where a Conditional Use Permit is required.
5. There are currently no development standards or restrictions on vineyard development within the CSD.
6. Access to well drilling information has historically not been feasible due to privacy protections from legislation such as California Assembly Bill 1512 of 1951 (Dickey) and the Information Practices Act of 1977. However, in June 2015, California Senate Bill 83 amended the California Water Code § 13752 to allow public access to Well Completion Reports, which are submitted to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR). Statewide, there are close to 800,000 reports on file with DWR, and DWR has the goal of making all reports available within the next year.


7. The regulations within the proposed amendment were developed with input from the appropriate County agencies, including Public Works, Public Health and Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures. In addition, staff researched best practices for viticulture and for the operation of vineyards.
8. To ensure that vineyards are developed in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses, adequately protects habitat, water quality, and visual resources, and prevents soil erosion, new and expanding vineyards will have to comply with development standards addressing these issues.
9. To ensure that vineyards are developed in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses and they comply with the prescribed development standards, a conditional use permit will be required for all new and expanding vineyards.
10. To ensure that existing vineyards are operated and maintained in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses, adequately protects habitat and water quality, and prevents soil erosion, existing vineyards will be required to comply with development standards addressing these issues within five years of the effective date of the ordinance, or otherwise cease to exist.
11. To ensure that existing vineyards are operated and maintained in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses and they comply with the prescribed development standards, a Director's Review will be required for existing vineyards to ensure compliance with the required development standards.
12. To ensure that data on vineyard water usage is collected, applicants for new or expanding vineyards shall be required to provide expected annual water usage for vineyard irrigation and onsite operations related to vineyard production. Applicants for new or expanding vineyards shall also be required to indicate the water source proposed for a site, and whether a new or deeper well will be needed. If a new or deeper well is needed, that applicant shall be required to provide the depth of the proposed well, projected flow rate, and any anticipated impacts to the surrounding region, where feasible.
13. The Director of the Department of Regional Planning has been directed to obtain water well data from DWR, namely, the total number of existing wells, the average depth of the wells, and the number of wells permitted per year within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area CSD. This information will serve as a baseline for evaluation purposes as CUPs are processed.
14. The Department of Regional Planning has determined that a Negative Declaration is the appropriate environmental documentation under California Environmental Quality Act reporting requirements.

15. The amendments are consistent with the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan, particularly those contained in the Open Space and Conservation Element and the Land Use Element. The proposed amendments would address runoff, soil erosion, water quality, water conservation, protection of habitats and scenic resources, and proof of legal access, consistent with Policies No. 4, 12, 16, and 24 of the Conservation and Open Space Element, and Policies No. 13, 15, and 20 of the Land Use Element.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Planning Commission recommends that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

1. Certify the completion of and adopt the attached Negative Declaration and find that the ordinance amendment will not have a significant effect on the environment; and,
2. Hold a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code relating to regulating vineyards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District; and
3. Adopt the draft ordinance as recommended by this Commission and amend Title 22 accordingly, and determine that the amendments are consistent with the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan.

I hereby certify that the foregoing was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles on September 30, 2015.

By 
Rosie O. Ruiz, Secretary
Regional Planning Commission
County of Los Angeles

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL

By 
Jill Jones, Deputy County Counsel
Property Division